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Francis Lieber LL.D.

With the Regards of

The Author

UTTERANCES:

BY

A. J. H. DUGANNE.

ANTE LUCEM.

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TO

William Curtis Noyes,

OF THE NEW YORK BAR,

THESE POEMS

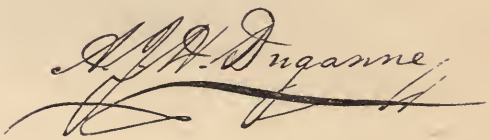
OF

FREEDOM

ARE

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Harvest and Vintage	7
On to Freedom	9
The Roman Twins	11
Make Way for Liberty	13
Czar and Serf	16
A Plea for the Ox	18
The Loyal Democrat	21
The Mills of God	23
Milo and the Oak	25
The Statue of Lincoln	28
Southland	31
The House of Bondage	34

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UTTERANCES.

Harvest and Vintage.

I DREAMED of a marvellous HARVEST—
I dreamed of a Threshing-Floor,
Where MEN, like grain, by Angels twain
Were garnered in measureless store;
All bound in sheaves, like corn in the leaves,
And flailed, from husk to core.
And the Angels sang, with voices sweet—
"Out of the Grain the Dross we beat,
Out of the Chaff we winnow the Wheat:
True Souls are the Wheat of a Nation!"

I dreamed of a wonderful VINTAGE—
I dreamed of a Wine-Press red,
Where MEN, like grapes, by Angel-shapes
Were trodden with wrathful tread;
As grapes ye work, to must and to murk,
And crush them, shred by shred.
And the Angels sang, with tongues divine—
"Out of the Murk the Must we fine,
Out of the Grapes we mellow the Wine:
Brave Hearts are the Wine of a Nation!"

I would that my Dream were Real—
That Angels this Land might beat!
And scourge our sod with the flails of God,
And scatter the chaff from the wheat;
And mightily tread, in our Wine-Press red,
All dross beneath their feet!
That our souls might sing, in joyous strain—
"Out of the Chaff the Wheat we gain,
Out of the Murk the Wine we drain:
The Wheat and the Wine of our Nation!"

I pray that the Angel of FREEDOM
May strive with the Angel of WAR:
Till MEN, like grain, these Winnowers twain
Shall flail, from husk to core;
Till MEN, like Wine, in libation divine,
To Thee, O GOD! they pour!
And forevermore sing, with tongues divine—
"God of the True! this WHEAT is Thine
God of the Free! receive this WINE:
The SOUL and the HEART of our Nation!"

MY BIRTHDAY, *August*, 1861.

On to Freedom.

"There has been the cry—'On to Richmond!' And still another cry—'On to England!' Better than either is the cry—'On to Freedom!'"—CHARLES SUMNER.

ON to FREEDOM! On to FREEDOM!
'Tis the everlasting Cry
Of the floods that strive with ocean—
Of the storms that smite the sky;
Of the atoms in the whirlwind,
Of the seed beneath the ground—
Of each living thing in Nature
That is bound!
'Twas the Cry that led from Egypt,
Through the desert wilds of Edom:
Out of Darkness—out of Bondage—
On to Freedom! On to Freedom!

O! thou stony-hearted PHARAOH!
Vainly warrest thou with GOD!
Moveless, at thy palace portals,
MOSES waits, with lifted rod!
O! thou poor barbarian, XERXES!
Vainly o'er the Pontic main
Flingest thou, to curb its utterance,
Scourge or chain!
For the cry that led from Egypt,
Over desert wilds of Edom,
Speaks alike through Greek and Hebrew:
On to Freedom! On to Freedom!

In the Roman streets, with GRACCHUS,
Hark! I hear that cry outswell;
In the German woods, with HERRMANN,
And on Switzer hills, with TELL!
Up from SPARTACUS, the Bondman,
When his tyrants' yoke he clave,
And from stalwart WAT the TYLER—
Saxon slave!
Still the old, old cry of Egypt,
Struggling up from wilds of Edom—
Sounding still through all the Ages:
On to Freedom! On to Freedom!

On to Freedom! On to Freedom!
Gospel-cry of laboring Time:
Uttering still, through Seers and Sages,
Words of Hope and Faith sublime!
From our SIDNEYS, and our HAMPDENS,
And our WASHINGTONS, they come:
And we cannot—and we dare not
Make them dumb!
Out of all the shames of Egypt—
Out of all the snares of Edom;
Out of Darkness—out of Bondage—
On to FREEDOM! On to FREEDOM!

NEW YORK, *November*, 1861.

The Roman Twins.

'Twas told by Roman soothsayers
(What time they read the stars),
That Romulus and Remus
Sprang from the loins of Mars;
That Romulus and Remus
Were twin-born on the earth,
And in the lap of a she-wolf
Were suckled from their birth.
By Heaven! I think this legend—
This ancient Roman myth—
For mine own time, and mine own clime,
Is full of pregnant pith.

Romulus stood with Remus,
And ploughed the Latian loam,
And traced, by yellow Tiber,
The nascent walls of Rome:
Then laughed the dark twin, Remus,
And scoffed his brother's toil,
And over the bounds of Romulus
He leapt upon his soil.
By Heaven! I think that Remus
And Romulus, at bay,
Of Slavery's strife with Liberty's life
Were antetypes that day.

The sucklings of the she-wolf
  Stood face to face in wrath,
And Romulus swept Remus
  Like stubble from his path:
Then crested he with temples
  The Seven Hills of his home,
And builded round, by Tiber,
  The eternal walls of Rome!
    By Heaven! I think this legend
      Hath store of pregnant pith:
    For mine own time, and mine own clime,
      'Tis more than Roman myth!

Like Romulus and Remus,
  Out of the loins of Mars,
Our Slavery and our Liberty
  Were born from cruel wars:
To both an Albic she-wolf
  Her bloody suck did give;
And one must slay the other,
  Ere one in peace can live!
    By Heaven! I think this legend
      Straight to our hearts comes home:
    When Slavery dies, shall grandly rise
      Freedom's Eternal Rome!

January, 1862.

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Make Way for Liberty.

"Arnold Struthan de Winkelried, a knight of Underwalden, burst suddenly from the ranks. 'I will open a passage for Liberty,' he cried. He threw himself on the enemy's pikes, grasped as many of them as he could reach, and bore them to the ground as he fell His comrades rushed over his body."—Planta, "Hist. of the Helvetic Cantons."

Under the oaks of Sempach
The Switzers knelt in prayer,
And sware upon their sword-hilts
The oath their fathers sware.
Under the oaks of Sempach
Their fathers' swords they bared,
And dared the powers of Slavery
Their valiant fathers dared.

Duke Leopold's knights in armor,
Duke Leopold's spearmen tall,
With shields o'erlapped, and lance-points,
Stood up, like castle wall;
And when the Swissmen smote them,
Their angry armor rang,
Like anvils under hammers—
With hoarse and sullen clang!

And when the Switzers charged them,
So well they bore the shock,
The mountain-men fell backward,
Like billows from a rock—

Fell back, with dead and dying,
  Fell back, with doubts and fears,
That none might pass the shield-wall,
  Or break the hedge of spears!

Behold! the fateful moment—
  The hour of Freedom's stress!
Then stood forth ARNOLD WINKELRIED,
  From all the dubious press.
He looked upon the Switzers,
  And saw their fear and doubt—
"I'LL make a path for LIBERTY!"
  Bold WINKELRIED cried out.

He turned upon the Austrians,
  And flung his arms apart:
He clasped a score of lance-points,
  And joined them at his heart.
As bride embraces bridegroom,
  He hugged the lovely death:
"I make a path for LIBERTY!"
  He said, with dying breath.

And after him the Switzers
  No more knew doubts or fears:
They passed the broken shield-wall—
  They passed the hedge of spears:

And where he fell they mounted,
O'er shattered helm and shield,
And drave the Austrian spoilers
From Sempach's gory field!

Five hundred years have mouldered
O'er WINKELRIED the Swiss:
No slave hath breathed in Switzerland
From that brave day to this.
And as the Lord yet liveth,
I cannot help but pray
Some WINKELRIED might lift his voice
In mine own land to-day!

Some stern and loyal Leader,
To shame our doubts and fears,
And cleave for us the shield-wall,
And break the hedge of spears:
Some hero-man, o'ermastering
A slavish time like this—
To make a path for LIBERTY—
Like WINKELRIED the Swiss!

December, 1861.

Czar and Serf.

There came out word from Muscovy,
To all the Christian lands—
That Kaiser Alexander
Had loosed his vassals' bands;
That the Czar of all the Russias,
By brave and wise commands,
Had riven the yoke from bondmen's necks,
The shackles from their hands.
Then all the wide world shouted—
Wherever Christians are—
"'Tis a noble deed this man hath done!
All hail! the Russian Czar!"

O'er all the land of Muscovy
Was Slavery's leprous scurf—
Till Kaiser Alexander said:
"Emancipate the Serf!"
Till the Czar of all the Russias
To shapes of breathing turf
Gave thrice ten million freemen's souls—
A soul for every serf.
Then all the wide world shouted—
Wherever Christians are—
"'Tis a blessed deed this man hath done!
God keep the Russian Czar!"

I think if he of Muscovy
  Were Ruler here, this day,
And underneath Rebellion's foot
  His bleeding country lay;
With twice three hundred thousand men
  Behind him, fierce for fray,
He would not brook that SLAVERY
  Should hold him long at bay;
    With all the wide world gazing,
      Wherever Christians are—
    I am sure a DEED would soon be done
      By Russia's valiant Czar!

God knows, THIS land, like Muscovy,
  Was rank with Slavery's scurf;
God knows, it made the ruler oft
  More leprous than the serf:
And yet, in sight of Bunker Hill,
  In sight of Vernon's turf,
We shrink from ALEXANDER'S cry—
  "Emancipate the Serf!"
    With all the wide world gazing—
      Wherever Christians are—
    We are cowering still at Slavery's feet—
      Rebuked by Russia's Czar!

NEW YORK, *December*, 1861.

A Plea for the Ox.

Of all my Father's herds and flocks,
I love the Ox—the large-eyed Ox!
I think no Christian man would wrong
The Ox—so patient, calm, and strong!

How huge his strength! and yet, with flowers
A child can lead this Ox of ours;
And yoke his ponderous neck, with cords
Made only of the gentlest words.

By fruitful Nile the Ox was Lord;
By Jordan's stream his blood was poured;
In every age—with every clan—
He loves, he serves, he dies for Man!

And, through the long, long years of God,
Since laboring Adam delved the sod,
I hear no human voice that mocks
The hue which God hath given His Ox!

While burdening toils bow down his back,
Who asks if he be white or black?
And when his generous blood is shed,
Who shall deny its common red?

"Ye shall not muzzle"—God hath sworn—
"The Ox, that treadeth out the corn!"
I think no Christian law ordains
That Ox or MAN should toil in chains.

So, haply, for an Ox I pray,
That kneels and toils for us this day;
A huge, calm, patient, large-eyed Ox,
Black-skinned, among our herds and flocks.

So long, O righteous Lord! so long
Bowed down, and yet so brave and strong—
I think no Christian, just and true,
Can spurn this poor Ox for his HUE!

I know not why he shall not toil,
Black-skinned, upon our broad, free soil;
And lift aloft his dusky frame,
Unbranded by a bondman's name!

And struggling still, for nobler goal,
With wakening will and soaring soul,
I know not why his great free strength
May not be our best wealth at length:

That strength which, in the limbs of SLAVES—
Like Egypt's—only piles up graves!
But in the hands of FREEMEN now
May build up States, by axe and plough!—

And rear up souls, as purely white
As angels, clothed with heavenly light;
And yield forth life-blood, richly red
As patriot hearts have ever shed.

God help us! we are veiled within—
Or white or black—with shrouds of skin;
And, at the last, we all shall crave
Small difference in the breadth of grave!

But—when the grass grows, green and calm,
And smells above our dust, like balm—
I think our rest will sweeter be,
If over us the Ox be—FREE!

February, 1862.

The Loyal Democrat.

Mouth not to me your Union rant,
Nor gloze mine ears with loyal cant!
Who stands this day in Freedom's van,
He only is my Union Man!
Who tramples Slavery's Gesler hat,
He is my Loyal Democrat.

With whips, engirt by chains, too long
We strove to make our fasces strong;
When rebel hands those fasces rend,
Must we with whips and chains still mend?
If "Democrats" can stoop to that,
God help me! I'm no Democrat!

Thank Heaven! the lines are drawn, this hour,
'Twixt Manly Right and Despot Power;
Who scowls in Freedom's pathway now,
Bears "Tyrant" stamped upon his brow;
Who skulks aloof, or shirks his part,
Hath "Slave" imprinted in his heart!

In vain of "equal rights" ye prate
Who fawn like dogs at Slavery's gate:
Beyond the slave each slave-whip smites,
And codes for blacks are laws for whites;
The chains that negro limbs encoil
Reach and enslave each child of toil.

O Northern Men! when will ye learn
'Tis Labor that these tyrants spurn!
'Tis not the blood or skin they brand,
But every Poor Man's toil-worn hand!
And ye who serve them—knowing this—
Deserve the slave-lash that ye kiss!

While Northern blood remembrance craves
From thrice ten thousand Southern graves,
Shall free-born hearts, beneath the turf,
Lie always crushed by tramp of serf—
And pilgrims, at those shrines, some day,
By Slavery's hounds be driven away?

The green grass in the churchyard waves,
And good corn grows o'er battle graves;
But, O! from crimson seeds now sown,
What crops—what harvest—shall be grown?
On Shiloh's plain—on Roanoke's sod—
What fruits shall spring from blood, O God!

Spring-time is here! The Past now sleeps—
The Present sows—the Future reaps!
Who plants good seed in Freedom's span,
He only is my Union Man!
Who treads the weeds of Slavery flat,
He is my Loyal Democrat!

March, 1862.

The Mills of God.

„Die Mühlen Gottes mahlen sehr fein."

Those Mills of God! those tireless mills!
I hear their ceaseless throbs and thrills:
I see their dreadful stones go round,
And all the realms beneath them ground;
And lives of men, and souls of States,
Flung out, like chaff, beyond their gates.

And we, O God! with impious will,
Have made these Negroes turn Thy Mill!
Their human limbs with chains we bound,
And bade them whirl Thy mill-stones round:
With branded brow and fettered wrist,
We bade them grind this Nation's grist!

And so, like Samson—blind and bound—
Our Nation's grist this Negro ground;
And all the strength of Freedom's toil,
And all the fruits of Freedom's soil,
And all her hopes, and all her trust,
From Slavery's gates were flung, like dust.

With servile souls this Mill we fed,
That ground the grain for Slavery's bread:

With cringing men, and grovelling deeds,
We dwarfed our land to Slavery's needs;
Till all the scornful nations hissed,
To see us ground with Slavery's grist.

The Mill grinds on! From Slavery's plain,
We reap great crops of blood-red grain;
And still the Negro's strength we urge,
With Slavery's gyve and Slavery's scourge;
And still we crave—on Freedom's sod—
That Slaves shall turn the Mills of God!

The Mill grinds on! God lets it grind!
We sow the seed—the sheaves we bind:
The mill-stones whirl as WE ordain;
Our CHILDREN'S BREAD shall test the GRAIN!
While Samson still in chains we bind,
The Mill grinds on! God LETS it grind!

June 12, 1862.

Milo and the Oak.

On Croton's plains, where Grecian youths
In silence learned immortal truths,
And wise Pythagoras taught the schools
That Freedom reigns where Justice rules:

On Croton's plains, in days of old,
Stout Milo roved—a wrestler bold;
Whose brawny arm, as legends tell,
With one good blow an ox could fell.

And when this Milo dined, we read,
An ox might scarce his hunger feed;
So strong was he, so wide of maw,
His like, I think, the world ne'er saw.

In stalwart pride he strode the plains,
A tyrant grim o'er kine and swains;
And swung, beneath Crotona's oaks,
A woodman's axe, with giant strokes;

And, day by day, his wedges drove,
Until the goodliest oak he clove—
A lofty tree, whose branches spann'd
The broad, fair fields with foliage grand.

With foliage green, like sheltering wings,
O'er flowers, and fruits, and breathing things;
O'er swarming bees, and nestling birds,
And laboring men, with flocks and herds.

The stars were clustered round its crest,
And sunbeams striped its blooming breast;
And under it—as well might be—
Pythagoras taught how souls were free!

But MILO, mustering strength perverse,
His wedges drove, with scowl and curse,
Till, rending through the oak-tree's side,
They clove its trunk with fissures wide.

And, yielding round those wedges black,
The huge tree quaked, with thunderous crack,
Until, beneath their widening strain,
Its heart of oak seemed riven in twain.

Then MILO, in his madness, spoke:
"I think my strength can tear this oak!
These wedges I no more need drive—
My HANDS alone the trunk shall rive!"

With giant gripe, the oak to rend,
He bowed himself, as whirlwinds bend;
With furious tug, and desperate strain,
To rive that goodly oak in twain.

Till, one by one, with loosening clang,
Those iron wedges outward sprang;
And, narrowing its elastic strands,
The tough oak closed on Milo's hands.

It crushed him in its fierce rebound;
It shook each black wedge to the ground;
It lifted up its crest of stars,
And bade the sunbeams gild its scars!

I know not if Pythagoras spoke
To freeborn souls of Milo's oak;
But this I know—that if there towers
Such oak-tree in this land of ours—

And if some impious hand should strain
To rend that goodly oak in twain—
Methinks I'd cry aloud, this day,
"In God's name, strike the wedge away!"

The wedge, that rent the strands apart,
The wedge, that fain would cleave the heart;
Strike out this wedge! and God will close
The Union's oak on Union's foes!

August, 1862.

The Statue of Lincoln.

"There is a niche in the Temple of Fame, a niche near to WASHINGTON, which should be occupied by the statue of him who shall save his country. Mr. LINCOLN has a mighty destiny. It is for him to be but a President of the people of the United States, and there will his statue be."—JOHN J. CRITTENDEN.

WELL hast thou said—John Crittenden!
Albeit the prophet's loftier ken
Be still denied to thee—
"If ABRAHAM LINCOLN dare to stand,
The People's Chief—and save this land—
Where WASHINGTON towers, calmly grand,
There will his statue be!"

I hail thy words, O Crittenden!
And if thy faith goes with them, then
That faith goes far with me:
But while THY Lincoln's niche awaits
The quarryings of our "Border States,"
MY Lincoln guards the UNION's gates,
And there his niche shall be!

Beneath that niche—John Crittenden!
His name was graven by History's pen,
When Freedom's sunlit sea,
Upswelling from Potomac's wave,
Bore back the slave-mart and the slave:
And there—where life to souls he gave—
There shall his statue be!

And far away, O Crittenden!
Where dark Liberia's citizen
Thanks God that he is free:
And where the Haytien smites his foes
With doctrines sharper than Monroe's,
There LINCOLN's name the patriot knows—
There will his statue be!

Still moves the world, O Crittenden!
Though trembling Galileo again
Recant, on servile knee;
And FREEDOM still, with lifted head,
Moves grandly o'er her martyred dead—
And, blasted, underneath her tread,
Our Slavery yet shall be!

In vain, in vain, John Crittenden!
Thy Border States and Border Men
Like Xerxes, mock the sea:
Above their whips and chains it rolls,
In billowy tides of loyal souls—
And where, at FREEDOM's feet, it shoals,
God grant that LINCOLN be!

O silver-tongued John Crittenden!
Sweet are thy words to thoughtful men,
Though hollow sounds from thee:

Where loyal arm and loyal prayer
The standard of this land would bear,
Let ABRAHAM LINCOLN mount—and there,
There will his statue be!

When LINCOLN'S hand, O Crittenden!
Shall dip within his HEART the pen
That writes this nation FREE—
Then, towering where the angels climb,
His starry soul shall stand, sublime,
And, throned upon all Future Time,
There shall his STATUE be!

NEW YORK, *August*, 1862.

Southland.

The Crescent moon rides high to-night;
The Crescent city sleeps in light;
The Crescent river flashes bright,
Outdrawn like circling scymitar;
But, gleaming through the heavens afar,
I only see the Northern Star!

O loyal star! whose steadfast rays
O'erlight this wild war's angry maze—
To thee I lift my trustful gaze:
O'er crescent moons of fitful sheen,
And meteor stars that flit between,
Thou rulest our land with beam serene.

O Northern Star! that sweetly glows
Above my country's breast of snows,
Where milk of heroes richly flows;
While round about her matron loins,
Where patriot mould its likeness coins,
The zone of Freedom closely joins.

In starry folds of midnight skies,
And crimson rifts of sunset dyes,
She walks before my yearning eyes;
O'er breezy breaks of Northern sod,
She walks the hills that Freedom trod—
Her hand within the Hand of God!

But here, O Heaven! beneath thy smiles,
The Southland's wanton weaves her wiles—
The Harlot's couch our land defiles:
With zoneless waist and bosom bare,
With bacchant arms and fluttering hair,
She woos the world her shame to share.

For what hath all this Southland been,
But one white sepulchre of sin!—
So fair without—so foul within!
Where Lust and Greed no law controlled—
Where manhood's soul was weighed with gold,
And woman's shame was gauged and sold!

This Temptress of our Land, whose toils
Wooed Freedom's self within their coils,
By lure of Slavery's spicy spoils:
Who kissed the North with wanton mouth,
And parched our Northern souls with drouth
For love-draughts of the syren South!

And still, O Heaven! her coil she spins,
To tempt the Northland with her sins—
And still she woos, O God!—and wins!
In lap of flowers, with helmet doffed,
Our Northern Samson sinks, full oft,
Beneath this Harlot's dalliance soft.

Wake, Northland! wake! there is no room
Between thy life and Slavery's doom!—
Her kiss thy death—her couch thy tomb!
Fling off those arms—that yielding zone;
And learn—O learn! that STEEL alone
Must find her heart—or cleave thine own!

Wake, Northland! wake! thy flag advance!
Ere Slavery's spells thy soul entrance,
And blunt the steel of Freedom's lance.
Break, break, O WAR! this swoon of ours!
Mow down with fire these wanton bowers:
Make ashes of their opiate flowers!

IN CAMP, LAFOURCHE, LA., *March*, 1863.

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The House of Bondage.

From mossy woods and cypress bolls,
The swimming snakes have sought their holes;
On heavy wing the night-owl flits,
With drooping head the vulture sits,
And down the bayou's sultry tide
I hear the stealthy cayman glide.

I weary of these orange-blooms,
And tuneless birds with gorgeous plumes,
And white magnolia's sweet attaint,
Whereof the honeyed air grows faint;
I weary of this golden cane,
This silvery cotton—and this CHAIN!

The iron chain—the rusted chain,
That manacles each fruitful plain;
That binds the woodland and the sward—
That binds the laborer and the lord!—
It wearies soul—it wearies strength:
I think it wearies Heaven, at length!

Dear Heaven! this green and fertile mead—
These fields, that swell with pregnant seed;
These orchards ripe and gardens rare,
And sunlit skies and fragrant air;

This broad domain that Freedom craves—
Why must it be the House of Slaves?

The red oaks lift their vernal sheen—
The cypress waves in lustrous green;
But underneath lies withering bark,
Where creeps the swamp-moss, gray and stark,
And chokes the sweet life where it hangs—
Fit type of Slavery's deathful fangs!

I marvel oft, if shames distil
From lands that nurse no rippling rill;
If wrongs must still oppress these leas,
Because they feel no upland breeze;
If slaves must breed in swamp and fen,
While hill-tops suckle freeborn men!

No, Freedom! no!—thy generous veins
Can flood with life these sluggish plains;
Thy breath, that lifts our flags to God,
Shall quicken all this servile sod:
All dead things shall thy voice obey,
And rise, like Lazarus, from decay!

From Texas sand to Hampshire snow,
Five hundred thousand bayonets glow!
I cannot think these Northern knives
Can e'er be forged to Southern gyves;
Or they that wield them—freeborn men—
Will build the House of Slaves again!

I draw my sword, and poise the blade—
I feel no manly strength decayed:
I swing it through yon palmy sedge—
It smites—it bites—with warlike edge!
It cuts as well—this freedom-brand—
In Southern as in Northern land!

I kiss my sword, and gripe the hilt—
I think of blood for Union spilt:
Beneath my flag of stars I stand—
I lift this steel blade in my hand,
And swear that ALL this land is free!—
O GOD! break not mine oath for me!

IN CAMP, BAYOU BLACK, La., *April*, 1863.

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